

W. H. Hudson of Buenos Ayres, have all recently sent collections to London, which have come under our examination. Besides these, M. Taczanowski, of Warsaw, has lately visited this country for the purpose of comparing some of the specimens lately collected by M. Jelski in Central Peru with our named series. The result has been the determination of 23 new species, which were described by M. Taczanowski at a recent meeting of the Zoological Society. It must be recollected that these are additional to the new species lately described by Dr. Cabanis from the same collection. It is certainly remarkable that a district already visited by Tschudi should have yielded such novel results, and gives a good idea of the richness of the Andean avifauna.

We have now concluded a summary notice of the principal events in geographical ornithology that have lately taken place. We hope to be able to continue the subject in the next number of 'The Ibis' by the addition of a few remarks on the monographs and works bearing on the general scope of ornithology lately published or in preparation.

XXII.—*Letters, Announcements, &c.*

The following letters, addressed "To the Editor of 'The Ibis,'" have been received:—

Northrepps, Norwich,
January 16, 1874.

SIR,—I observe that Lieut. Legge, at p. 9 of his interesting paper in the present volume of 'The Ibis,' on the birds of Southern Ceylon, refers the *Spilornis* inhabiting that district to *S. cheela*, but mentions that it there "appears to average smaller dimensions than in India."

Mr. Holdsworth, on the contrary, in the P. Z. S. for 1872, at p. 412, refers the *Spilornis* of Ceylon to *S. bacha* (Daudin), of which *S. bido* (Horsfield) is a synonym.

All the Ceylonese specimens of *Spilornis* which have come

under my notice have certainly belonged to the latter species, which is also an inhabitant of the Malay peninsula, Sumatra, and Java.

I am yours, &c.,
J. H. GURNEY.

33 Carlyle Square, S.W.
February 21, 1874.

SIR,—I should like to make a correction or two to my paper on Chinese ornithology, sent from Shanghai, and published in 'The Ibis' for last October. At page 364 I have reported that I got in the market a *Circus cineraceus*. This, on closer examination, I find to be a male *C. melanoleucus* in the light reddish brown immature dress, a state in which the bird does not appear to have been procured before. This plumage has neither been described nor figured. I have never met with Montagu's Harrier myself in China, nor have I any evidence of its occurrence within our limits.

At page 366 I suggest that *Æthya ferina*, or the "Ferruginous Duck," should be expunged from the Chinese list of birds, as it had never occurred to me. Mr. A. Michie, of Shanghai, writes and describes a Duck which has lately been brought to him at Shanghai from the Taihoo Lake in some numbers. His description tallies precisely with that of this species. So my suggestion falls through.

When passing through Shanghai a few months back, Mr. Triggs, of Lane, Crawford, & Co., presented me with the skin of an adult male and of an immature male of *Pelecanus crispus* which he had shot a week before on the river close to Shanghai. I was aware of the existence of this species in China, but never procured specimens before.

I am, yours truly,
ROBERT SWINHOE.

33 Carlyle Square, S.W.
March 7, 1874.

SIR,—It will be interesting to some of the readers of 'The Ibis' to learn that the bird described by Radde in his 'Reisen

im Süden von Ost-Sibirien, 1855-59,' Band ii. p. 260, Taf. ix., as *Sylvia* (*Phyllopneuste*) *schwarzi*, is the same as that named by Prof. Milne-Edwards *Abrornis armandi*, Nouv. Arch. du Mus. iii. Bull. p. 32. In my "Revised Catalogue of the Birds of China," P. Z. S. 1871, no. 132 (p. 355), I proposed a new genus for this species, but entered it by mistake as *A. davidii*. It should now stand as *Oreopneuste schwarzi* (Radde). I have never met with the bird in China, but have a specimen collected by Père David at Pekin, one of the "doubles" received in exchange from the museum at the Jardin des Plantes.

It may be as well also to note that my name *Calamodyta bistrigiceps*, P. Z. S. 1871, p. 353, must give way to von Schrenck's *Salicaria* (*Calamodyta*) *maacki*, 'Reisen und Forschungen in Amurland,' Band i. p. 370, Taf. xii. figs. 4-6, which relates to the same species and has priority. The figure on the plate gives a good idea of the bird, but, unfortunately, leaves out its chief characteristic, the black line over the eye-brow. V. Schrenk founded the species on a single specimen procured by Herr Maack (the astronomer) south of the Amoor river. Père David has procured it at Peking; and I have two specimens from Amoy. It has lately also been found by Blakiston at Hakodadi, North Japan.

Yours truly,

ROBERT SWINHOE.

Dinapore, India,
March 10, 1874.

SIR,—I was glad to see, in 'The Ibis' for January 1874, that the little bird I called *Melizophilus striatus* had been identified as *Drymæca inquieta*, Rüpp.

I was not satisfied with my generic determination of the bird, on account of the very different nest and eggs. My examples of *Melizophilus provincialis* were very bad ones, with some of the tail-feathers wanting. The strongly striated plumage, however, is against the bird being a *Melizophilus*; and this I should have taken more account of.

As far as *Hippolais elaica*, Lindermayer, is concerned, Mr. Blanford is wrong in considering it identical with the Indian species known as *H. rama*, which is identical with *H. caligata*, Licht.

I have the eggs of both ; and they are widely different. The habits, notes, and nest of *H. elaica* are all described as different from those of the Indian bird. There are many birds apparently much alike which are quite distinct. I believe that the bird usually now received as *H. rama* is not that species, but that *Jerdonia agricolensis*, Hume, = *Sylvia rama*, Sykes.

Mr. Blyth says, "Mr. Jerdon has sent me two very closely allied races which he thinks have been confounded under *Phylloperne rama*. The one he regards as true *rama*, which is of a more rufescent brown colour ; the other has a more greyish shade. I can hardly, however, bring myself to admit their distinctness. The latter variety occurs abundantly in Lower Bengal, upon the sandy soil above the tideway of the Hoogly, haunting babool topes and scattered trees near villages, as well as hedges and low bush-jungle ; and I have recently observed it in the jungles north and west of Midnapore."—*Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1847, p. 439.

Again he says, "Those of S. India have a slight ferruginous tint throughout ; but we can detect no further difference."—*J. A. S.* xiii. p. 483.

Col. Sykes's original description is as follows :—

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"SYLVIA RAMA. *Sylv. pallidè brunnea, subtus albescens ; caudā obsoletè fasciatā.* Longitudo corporis $4\frac{7}{10}$, caudæ $1\frac{9}{10}$."—*P. Z. S.* 1832, p. 89.

The more rufous bird is the *smaller* one, which Mr. Hume described as *Jerdonia agricolensis*, from a large series of each which I had prepared. The original description of *Sylvia rama*, on account of the small size of the bird, will not apply to the larger and paler bird usually received as *H. rama*. This will stand as *H. caligata*, Lichtenstein ; and the smaller, or *Jerdonia agricolensis*, Hume, should, I think, be received in future as the true *H. rama*, Sykes.

The geographical distribution of the two birds also favours this conclusion.

Of the perfect distinctness of the two species, *H. rama* and *H. caligata*, there can be no possible doubt. Habits vary, notes perceptibly so to me; and when freshly moulted, the warm ruddy *rama* is a very different bird from the cold grey *caligata*. In this remark Messrs. Tristram and Hume can bear me out. Had I not carefully studied both birds in life, I might, like Mr. Blanford, have considered *faded* examples of each identical; but knowing the two species as well as I do, to unite them is, with me, an impossibility.

The closely allied species are the great charm of ornithology, and, unless upon sure grounds, no such thing as actual connexion or interbreeding should be supposed.

For my own part, I have had as many birds through my hands as most people, but I have never yet seen the slightest proof of any connexion between closely allied species; nor have I heard of such interbreeding in a wild state.

These fascinating affine species are as distinct creations as *Gyps barbatus* and *Nitidula hodgsoni*; and in regard to the most interesting subjects in ornithology let us stick to facts and avoid speculation.

I am yours, &c.,

W. E. BROOKS.

Mr. Gould points out to us that the *Suya superciliaris* of Hume, figured in Henderson and Hume's 'Lahore to Yarkand,' pl. xviii. p. 218, of which a single imperfect specimen was obtained on the Yarkand plains, is, as he believes, identical with *Rhopophilus pekinensis*, Swinhoe, figured in the 25th Part of the 'Birds of Asia.' Mr. Gould has examined Dr. Henderson's type, which, however, it would be well to compare with Mr. Swinhoe's series. We may remark that there is another *Suya superciliaris*, of Anderson (P. Z. S. 1871, p. 212); so that Mr. Hume's name would not stand in any case.—P. L. S.

Dr. Kirk has brought with him on his return from Zanzibar a Grey Parrot (*Psittacus erithacus*). He informs us that this

Parrot was brought from the Manyema country, on the west of Lake Tangyanika, opposite Ujiji, where, according to Dr. Livingstone's information, the chief is called "Mana-kos," or "King of the Koskos" or Parrots. The existence of *Psittacus erithacus* in the Niam-niam country, on the western watershed of the White Nile, was already known*; but the fact of its occurrence on Lake Tangyanika is, we believe, new. Dr. Kirk says it is often brought down to Zanzibar by the dealers in ivory.—P. L. S.

Mr. Clark Kennedy is preparing a volume on the natural history of the Orkney Islands, which will be published about the end of June. It will be entitled 'The Sportsman and Naturalist among the Isles of Orkney,' and will contain a complete list of all the birds of those islands, with notes on their habits and migrations, and descriptions of other animals and plants met with there.—P. L. S.

M. Bourcier's collection of Humming-birds was, as we are informed by Mr. D. G. Elliot, sold in Paris in the beginning of last March. Mr. Elliot bought nearly all the types, and also the specimens of the rarer species, for his own collection, where, he requests us to say, they will in future be accessible to any one desirous of consulting them.

We are also informed that Count Turati, of Milan, has bought half the collection of Humming-birds belonging to the late E. Verreaux. The remaining portion is still undisposed of.—P. L. S.

The New Paradise-birds and their Discoverers.—The concluding part (iv.) of the 'Journal für Ornithologie' for 1873 (dated October 1873, but only issued a few days since) contains the description of a "new Paradise-bird, *Epimachus wilhelminæ*," by Dr. A. B. Meyer. The article is dated "Andai (New Guinea), 15 March, 1873," (Did the MS.

* Cf. Heuglin, Ornith. Nordost-Afrika's, p. 745.

really travel by post all the way from Andai to Berlin?) The supposed new bird is obviously the same as *Drepanornis albertisi*, discovered by d'Albertis at Atam, in the Arfak mountains in September 1872, received in London on June 17, 1873, and described the same evening at the Zoological Society's meeting*. Now when Dr. A. B. Meyer arrived in Vienna in October last, he wrote to me for information concerning this bird, and I immediately sent him a copy of the article in 'Nature' in which it is described and figured. He had therefore ample time to have cancelled his redescription sent to the 'Journal für Ornithologie,' and ought to have done so. Its appearance at this late date, without reference to D'Albertis's discovery, requires explanation, failing which it can only be regarded as an attempt to obtain an unfair priority.

I also learn from Hr. J. v. Rosenberg, the distinguished Dutch traveller, that in April 1871 he saw a single female specimen of this same Paradise-bird in the collection of Mr. D. van Duivenbode, Jr., at Ternate, and had proposed to call it *Epimachus veithii*, in a work on his travels in the Eastern Archipelago, which is now in preparation. It is singular that three travellers should have all so nearly at the same time met with traces of this hitherto unknown species.

Signor L. M. d'Albertis has just passed through London on his return to Genoa from Sydney, viâ Levuka, Honolulu, and San Francisco. He has left his extensive collections here, and will shortly return to work them out. He tells us that Orangerie Bay†, where the native skins of the new *Paradisaea raggiana* were obtained, is not near Salawatty, as I had supposed, but at the extreme S.W. point of New Guinea, in the district lately visited by H.M.S. 'Basilisk.' This point is of great interest, as showing that each part of Papua has its peculiar form of *Paradisaea*.

Signor d'Albertis, we are glad to say, gives us a good ac-

* See 'Nature,' viii. p. 306 (August 14th), and P.Z. S. 1873, p. 560, pl. xlvii.

† Not Arangesia, as misprinted by Mr. Elliot in his Monograph of the Paradise-birds.

count of the welfare of our colleague, Mr. E. L. Layard, whom he met with at the capital of our new Feejeean Dominion.—P. L. S.

Corrigenda. An unfortunate misprint has been made in the Supplementary number of our last volume, p. 462. *Otocaris* should have been printed *Otocoris*, the name having been *thus* written by Messrs. Blanford and Hume, whereas *Otocorys* (κόρυς, *alauda*) is the correct spelling; we have, unfortunately, given them the credit of a still greater blunder. Again, at p. 491, Mr. Brooks should have been named as the author who, according to Lord Walden, had wrongly identified specimens of *Siphia hyperythra* with *Erythrosterna parva*.—P. L. S.

Our last letter from Mr. Salvin (dated Guatemala, March 15th) announces his speedy return to England, viâ New York. He had lately been into Vera Paz, as far as Coban, staying a few days at San Geronimo by the way, where he had found *Panyptila sancti-hieronymi* engaged in nest-building. *Oreophasis derbianus* occurs, without doubt, in Vera Paz, several specimens having been obtained in a high ridge of mountains on the left bank of the Rio Negro, above the village of Chicomam in what *was* the department of Totonicapam, but now Gueguetenango.